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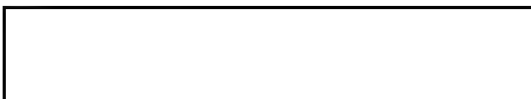


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PORTUGAL

Political parties and military leaders yesterday signed an agreement to return the country to civilian rule after nearly two years of military domination.

The final agreement is a victory for the non-communist political parties, which last year were forced to consent to military control over politics for at least three years. The new pact, under debate since December, confirms the shift to the right that has taken place since a leftist military uprising was put down by conservative officers on November 25.

The last-minute delay over the addition of a preamble that non-communist party leaders rejected as "Marxist" was resolved on Wednesday when military authorities agreed to strike the entire passage.

Negotiations had earlier snagged on the centrist Popular Democrats' insistence that presidential elections follow closely on legislative elections. The final draft specifies that a new president will be chosen by direct popular election not less than two months after the national assembly is selected. The assembly will be elected on April 25, which means the presidential election could take place in late June.

The complete text of the document is not yet available, but preliminary reports indicate that the president will be given wide-reaching powers to oversee the parliamentary system of government. Several political parties are expected to support the candidacy of a military officer to prevent dissension among the parties and to smooth the transition to a completely civilian government.

The only political responsibilities left to the military will be to advise the president and to guarantee the operation of the elected government. The Revolutionary Council, which has been the top decision-making body for nearly a year, will be limited to questioning the constitutionality of laws, advising the president if he decides to dissolve the legislature, and authorizing declarations of war. The Council will, however, retain chief jurisdiction over internal military affairs.

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ROMANIA

President Ceausescu's markedly independent speech to the Soviet party congress yesterday, together with his general behavior in Moscow and his abrupt return to Bucharest later in the day, will almost certainly heighten tensions in Soviet-Romanian relations.

In a sharp departure from the tone set by speeches of the other ruling party first secretaries, Ceausescu insisted that equality of rights and mutual advantage should govern relations between communist countries. He thus relegated "proletarian internationalism"—the codeword for Soviet leadership of international communism—to second place.

In addition, Ceausescu failed to mention anti-Sovietism and Maoism and called for the establishment of truly new relations of equality among nations "everywhere." He said solidarity in the world movement must be based on the observance of each party's right to develop its political line independently.

[redacted] the Romanian leader planned to return to Bucharest to attend to business. He will reportedly stay home until March 3, when he will return for the final days of the congress. Other members of the Romanian delegation, however, remain in Moscow.

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This highly unusual departure from a Soviet party congress by a ruling party leader suggests Ceausescu's deep dissatisfaction with Moscow. It could also indicate that he encountered stiffer criticism from his Soviet hosts than he had expected.

[redacted] his departure suggests instead a knowledge of events with which he does not want to be associated. For example, he may fear concerted attacks by Moscow's loyalist allies on Maoism and on the "independent" parties. In addition, he may be chafing under pressure to join in a coordinated approach to detente and for a discrediting of Western attacks on Moscow's poor performance in human rights.

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Ceausescu has steadfastly avoided Moscow's call to castigate anti-Sovietism. He may also wish to be absent when Premier Kosygin addresses the question of economic integration within CEMA.

Ceausescu's displeasure with the congress proceedings first became evident on Wednesday, when he chose to tour a factory in Moscow instead of attending the congress. Should Soviet-sponsored rhetoric get hotter, Romania's other delegates also may choose to see the sights of the Soviet capital rather than sit on their hands at the congress.

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In a further show of independence on Wednesday, Ceausescu met in the Romanian embassy with the entire Yugoslav delegation, headed by Stane Dolanc, President Tito's number-two man in the party. Belgrade described the talks as a "warm, friendly, and cordial" discussion on bilateral and international topics. The two delegations probably used this meeting to coordinate their opposition to several aspects of current Soviet policy, ranging from Moscow's message for a European communist party conference to its criticism of independent parties at the congress.

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BOLIVIA

Recent actions by President Banzer's government against alleged coup plotters, coupled with agitation in the universities and labor sector, suggest that the relative tranquility of the past year is ending.

Since late January, hundreds have been arrested on charges of subversive activity. Several unionists, university students, and former army officers have been exiled to Paraguay and Chile. Student protests have led to clashes with police and the closing of at least four universities.

To demonstrate displeasure over the first closure and as a gesture supporting the students, several thousand miners staged a strike on February 21. The university scene had become quieter yesterday with many students returning to classes, but pockets of discontent remain that could spark recurrent clashes with authorities.

These developments are bound to encourage further plotting among the exiles and will quite likely raise new rumors of such activity inside Bolivia. Banzer is far from popular, but he still controls the military, thereby ensuring his continued tenure for at least the immediate future.

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ASEAN

At the recently concluded summit meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the chiefs of state of Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines were able to sidestep conflicting national outlooks and personal animosities and produce a joint communique, a declaration of concord, and a treaty of amity and cooperation.

All three documents call for greater intra-regional economic and cultural cooperation, but none of them spells out any concrete proposals.

The closest the ASEAN heads of state came to agreeing on a specific course of action was in the economic arena. The five countries agreed to explore cooperative means for increasing food production, to provide priority access to oil and other commodities, and to establish complementary industrial projects in each country. Efforts to implement these agreements will be attempted at a "mini-summit" of economic ministers to be held in Malaysia in early March.

The summit was careful not to project ASEAN as a military or security pact. The declaration of concord calls on each nation to take steps to assure that the area will become a "zone of peace, freedom, and neutrality" and calls on each nation to cooperate on security matters "on a non-ASEAN basis" through bilateral agreements.

The summit called for the creation of mediation machinery to negotiate disputes between member states. This machinery, however, can be brought into play only through the agreement of the disputants themselves—an arrangement necessitated by Malaysia's concern that the Philippines could use the new amity treaty to resurrect its claim to Malaysia's north Borneo state of Sabah. Until this condition was agreed to at the last minute, the summit itself, according to some reports, was in jeopardy of being canceled.

The ASEAN members, still uneasy over the consequences of the communist take-overs in Indochina, did not take up the issue of expanding ASEAN's membership. They attempted to avoid any impression of hostility to the Indochinese states, however, by inviting other states of Southeast Asia to sign the amity treaty.

Vietnam has been quick to react to this gesture. Echoing the themes of Vietnamese pre-summit commentary, a Hanoi broadcast on February 26 declared that if the ASEAN states truly want to improve relations with other countries in Southeast Asia, they must "escape from the influence of the US imperialists, dismantle US military bases...and adopt a truly cooperative and friendly attitude."

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ALBANIA

During the past few weeks the situation in Albania has deteriorated to the point where diplomats in Tirana say the country resembles a concentration camp.

The massive purges of recent months, the increasing stridency of Tirana's propaganda, and the regime's drive to tighten ideological controls at home have all combined to raise the ever-present xenophobia to what may be an all-time high. Ordinary citizens are reportedly afraid even to exchange greetings with foreigners.

In addition, the normally secretive Albanians are hastily building bomb shelters and antiaircraft bunkers around the capital, and are making no effort to camouflage their activities. They have even requested embassies to build bomb shelters in their compounds. The French ambassador has noted that Albania is also in the midst of a "frenzied" attempt to build a chain of bunkers along the Adriatic coast.

These frenetic preparations bear the unmistakable stamp of party boss Enver Hoxha; they may well be designed to ensure the survival of his policies once he is gone.

In recent months, there have been recurring rumors—to which diplomatic observers in Tirana have lent substance—that both Hoxha and his second-in-command, Premier Mehmet Shehu, are in poor health. In fact, some Western diplomats doubt that the 67-year-old Hoxha will be around much longer.

Purging the ranks may have been the first step in his preparations for the eventual transfer of power to his successors. The process began a year and a half ago, and between the summer of 1974 and the spring of 1975, the top men in the Ministry of Defense were removed. There is still no reliable information on the causes for this action, and no official explanation has ever been provided by Tirana.

Subsequently, three top economic ministers were fired, two of whom had also been long-standing members of the Politburo. It now seems clear that all these officials were caught up in the first wave of a massive onslaught against "bureaucracy." The burden of this attack appears to have centered on the proliferation of administrative staffs in the ministries, local government, and other institutions such as the mass media.

Another critical aspect of the purges was the corresponding endorsement of "rotation of cadres" as an important remedy for the ills of bureaucracy. The net effect, of course, is to create a kind of permanent instability in the bureaucracy in which it would be very difficult for any kind of opposition to coalesce.

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The distrust of bureaucracy, the dislike of any other departures from a one-class society composed of rotating nonspecialists, and the unsophisticated doctrine of self-reliance in the economy are all dear to Hoxha. While dismissals in the military, economic, and cultural fields indicate that dissenting views exist, the evidence also strongly suggests that all newcomers must come from the party apparatus and that they must be personally loyal to Hoxha.

The subsequent steps in the process—tightening control at home and deliberately fostering the impression of imminent foreign intervention—seem ultimately aimed at Moscow.

It seems evident that Tirana continues to have an almost paranoid fear of the Soviet Union—a fear that has increased sharply since 1974, when pro-Soviet cominformists were discovered in neighboring Yugoslavia. Tirana continues to reject Soviet overtures for closer bilateral ties, although it is fairly certain that Moscow would be willing to extend substantial aid to Albania in order to improve relations.

The Soviet Union has several reasons for desiring to reestablish its influence in Albania. There would be important strategic ramifications if the USSR were to regain the use of port facilities on the Adriatic that it has been denied since 1960. Moscow would also have the satisfaction of dealing a blow—albeit hardly a major one—to Peking, which has been able to exploit Albanian hostility toward the Soviet Union. More important, Moscow would also obtain another pressure point that could be applied to Yugoslavia in the post-Tito era.

To what extent any policies and doctrines will change in a post-Hoxha regime is still unclear, but it is doubtful they would remain the same. China's relative indifference to Albania's economic plight may have contributed to Tirana's increasingly isolationist stance, but a new Albanian leadership is hardly likely to do an abrupt about-face and accept tutelage under the Yugoslavs or even the more distant Soviet Union.

It is quite possible, however, that there could be a reconciliation with the rest of Communist Europe that could change the political contours of the Balkans and cause concern in Belgrade and Bucharest. This would also mean that the Warsaw Pact would be closer to having an outlet on the Adriatic.

In the meantime, in the midst of the uproar he has created, Hoxha seems intent on projecting an image of renewed unity within the party leadership. In mid-January, the entire hierarchy turned out at the Chinese embassy to offer condolences on the death of Chou En-lai, and again in mid-February the hierarchy was in attendance for the Albanian People's Assembly session on the state plan and budget.

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SPANISH SAHARA

Spain's role as co-administrator of Spanish Sahara under the tripartite agreement it concluded with Morocco and Mauritania formally ends tomorrow.

The legal status of the territory will remain contentious, however, because Spain insists that its transfer of administrative control does not resolve the question of sovereignty. Algeria, which has rejected the tripartite agreement, still demands a referendum on self-determination and continues to support Polisario Front guerrillas seeking independence for the territory.

Madrid has consistently maintained that the sovereignty issue can only be decided in "consultation" with the people of Spanish Sahara. Although the tripartite agreement provided for such consultations through the territorial general assembly, a Spanish official recently indicated Madrid no longer supports this approach. The official attributed the change to the lack of provision for a UN role and to Rabat's selection of tribal leaders loyal to Morocco to replace the considerable number of assembly members who joined the Polisario Front. Algerian pressure on Spain apparently was largely responsible for Madrid's second thoughts on the consultation process.

The Moroccans, who had argued that the Saharans were consulted via the territorial assembly last November, nonetheless convened a special meeting of the assembly yesterday to "express the will of the people." According to a Moroccan radio broadcast, the assembly "unanimously approved" the tripartite agreement. Rabat says the session met the requirements for consultations called for in the resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly last December that in effect endorsed the tripartite accord. The Moroccans asked UN Secretary General Waldheim to send an observer and invited territorial assembly members who defected to the Front to participate in the session.

This latest gambit by Rabat to dispose of the troublesome consultation provision will satisfy no one but the Moroccans. Waldheim declined to send an observer, saying that Spain, as the administering power and as a member of the interim administration under the tripartite agreement, had not been informed of Morocco's request. A Spanish radio broadcast yesterday indicated Spain was withdrawing immediately to avoid any association with the Moroccan scheme.

The Algerians, for their part, are working to keep the issue alive at the UN and hold off international recognition of the Moroccan-Mauritanian take-over. Algiers will try to exploit the report of a UN envoy who visited Sahara recently on a fact-finding mission to push again for a referendum on self-determination. At the same time, the Boumediene government is striving in every available forum to enhance the political standing of the Polisario Front; this week it was lobbying at the OAU ministerial meeting in Addis Ababa.

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Arab League Secretary General Riad has ended his mediation mission. He left Nouakchott yesterday after visits to Algiers and Rabat. Algerian press reports following Riad's departure from Algeria claimed he had met with Polisario representatives; if true, he is likely to have received a cold shoulder in Morocco and Mauritania.

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UK-RHODESIA

A special British envoy is in Rhodesia to determine if Prime Minister Smith is prepared to advance quickly toward majority rule. Foreign Secretary Callaghan has also sent a personal message to black nationalist leader Joshua Nkomo to try to reassure him that London has no intention of striking a deal with Smith that would undermine the nationalists' position.

There have been some indications that London would be willing to provide financial assistance to ease the transition to majority rule if a breakthrough occurred in the stalled talks between Smith and Nkomo.

The Wilson government would like to see a peaceful settlement, if for no other reason than to avoid a situation in the future in which it would be under pressure from some members of the opposition and the media in Britain to aid a repressive Rhodesian government struggling with a strong guerrilla movement.

Earlier this week, Prime Minister Wilson made clear that London would do nothing to prop up "a semi-fascist regime" in Salisbury. He did say, however, that Britain would help "refugees" if the situation in Rhodesia deteriorated sharply.

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USSR: The first known visit by Soviet naval units to a Turkish port is taking place this week. Two Moma-class hydrographic research ships arrived at Antalya in southern Turkey on Monday and are expected to stay until tomorrow. US and other NATO military attaches in Turkey apparently had no advance word of the port call. Since late 1975 the Soviets have been involved in low-key efforts—including a visit by Premier Kosygin and an invitation to Turkish officers to observe Soviet military maneuvers in the Caucasus—to exploit Turkish-US frictions stemming from the US bases problem. The Turks have been receptive to the Soviet overtures, motivated in part by the growing acceptability of detente and in part by a desire to remind the US that it cannot take Turkey for granted. There is little to suggest that these developments portend a major change in Turkey's strong ties to the West.

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ANNEX

CASTRO AND CUBA'S FOREIGN POLICY

Cuba's Fidel Castro is a commanding figure among communist party leaders gathered in Moscow this week. His credentials are strong not only with his communist counterparts but with the heads of Third World governments and revolutionary groups.

In Moscow, and later in Eastern Europe, Castro will seek to exploit his new prestige to win support for his increasingly expansive foreign policy.

On visits to the USSR in the past, Castro was an underprivileged client seeking Soviet aid. This time, he will consult with Soviet leaders from a position of greater strength. The Cuban Revolution is more secure and successful. Cuban victories with the Popular Movement in Angola have underscored the wisdom of his audacious decision to send a Cuban expeditionary force to Africa.

Castro's credibility in Moscow is probably enhanced by the steps he recently has taken to accept Soviet orthodoxy. The first congress of the Cuban Communist Party last December was a major step in the institutionalization of the Cuban Revolution along lines recommended by Moscow.

In recent weeks, moreover, Havana has abandoned ten years of silence in the Sino-Soviet dispute by loosing a vicious propaganda barrage against Peking.

Castro's success in improving his position both as a communist and as a Third World leader will better enable him to carry out his more ambitious foreign policy. He wants to act as a bridge between the communists and the Third World. Castro is proud of the diversity of the Cuban populace and its cultural and linguistic affinities with a number of less developed nations. He seems to believe that in this manner he can forge a greater convergence of interests between the communists and the Third World and once again become a major player on the world stage.

Prime Minister Castro is encouraged to undertake a more aggressive foreign policy because he believes the balance of power has shifted during the last few years. In public statements during the past year or so, he has used the US failure in Southeast Asia, the Watergate affair, and revelations about and investigations of the US intelligence community, to argue that "imperialism" is in eclipse and that communist and Third World forces have gained the upper hand. Cuban successes in Angola have strongly reinforced his attitude.

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Castro is encouraged by the increasing compatibility of Cuban and Soviet objectives and methods in the Third World. The economic, technical, and security assistance that Cuban advisers provide the governments of several countries, including Algeria, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tanzania, and Zambia, contributes directly to the fulfillment of both Cuban and Soviet objectives.

The heightened degree of mutual trust has resulted in increased Soviet willingness to delegate to the Cubans immediate responsibility for advancing the objectives of both countries in certain Caribbean and African countries.

Cuba's Future Role in Africa

Castro appears determined to capitalize on Cuban success in Angola by continuing to be a major power broker in Africa. At least 12,000 Cuban troops are believed to be still in Angola, although the fighting has all but ended. Castro may be keeping them there as a reminder that he is committed to support wars of national liberation in southern Africa.

The extent of the support Cuba eventually will provide to guerrilla movements in southern Africa will depend largely on how much of a commitment Castro can win from the Soviets. The subject will be one of the central topics in his discussions with Soviet leaders during his stay in Moscow. Osmani Cienfuegos, Cuba's senior troubleshooter in Africa and the Middle East, and Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, the regime's top foreign policy official, are in Moscow with Fidel.

Castro will probably seek Soviet backing to begin providing material support and training to the faction of the African National Council that supports Joshua Nkomo in his efforts to negotiate a settlement with the Smith government in Rhodesia. Moscow has long aided the Nkomo faction and may agree to funnel arms and money through the Cubans.

If there is any truth in reports that Cuban military personnel and Soviet military equipment have been sent to Mozambique from Angola, then such a decision may already have been made. Cuban efforts will be hampered, however, by the poor organization and small size of the group and by the fact that Peking supports another faction of the Council that is militarily stronger and more active than Nkomo's.

Initially, the Cubans are likely to confine their efforts on behalf of the Rhodesian guerrillas to training and organizational areas while seeking to build up the group's capability. A small number of Cuban advisers may become involved in guerrilla operations, but it is not likely that regular Cuban troops will enter the conflict without strong endorsements from Moscow and major African nations.

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Cuba is likely to provide training and material support to the South-West African People's Organization in concert with the Angolan Popular Movement. The Cuban assistance would depend here, as in Rhodesia, on a variety of external factors. On balance, it seems unlikely that in the next few months Cuban personnel will become involved other than as advisers with guerrilla units.

Cuban support of the Katangan secessionists who oppose the Mobutu government in Zaire is possible but less likely than Cuban help in Rhodesia or South-West Africa. Despite his antipathy for Mobutu—against whom Che Guevara fought a guerrilla action in 1965—Castro would support a struggle against a legitimate black African government only in the unlikely event that its opponents had the overwhelming support of other African countries.

In the longer term, Cuba can be expected to expend considerable energy—both diplomatic and subversive—against white minority rule in South Africa. The possibilities for Cuban meddling are more limited there than elsewhere in southern Africa, but Havana may try to establish and support a guerrilla force—perhaps from bases in Mozambique.

Despite the triumphant mood of Castro and most of his military commanders following the success in Angola, few of them have illusions about how much more difficult and costly a conventional war with South Africa would be.

During 1976 a growing number of Cuban guerrilla advisers are likely to be assigned to African liberation groups; diverse Cuban aid programs probably will be expanded; and large numbers of Cuban advisers will work in Angola to help develop a system modeled on Cuba's. Unless the Neto government objects, a Cuban military contingent of at least several thousand is likely to remain in Angola both as a defensive force and to unsettle nearby white minority governments.

In concert with these efforts, Cuban officials and the media will concentrate on a theme that Castro broached late last year: "Cuba is not just a Latin American country, but also a Latin African country. African blood flows abundantly in our veins."

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